
The Bishop of CHESTER's
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

Q U E E N

At St. JAMES's, *March* the 16th. 17 ^{$\frac{11}{13}$} .

Dawes (Sir W.), Baronet, successively
K. Bishop of Exeter and Archbishop
of York.

The Bishop of CHESTER'S

SERMON

Preach'd before the

COUNCIL

At St James's Church the 10th 17th

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OF
The Right Use, and Abuse, of the Things of this World.

A ^{693. f. 10.}
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SERMON

Preach'd before the

QUEEN,

AT

Her ROYAL CHAPEL at St. James's,

ON

SUNDAY, *March* the 16th, 17 ^{$\frac{11}{12}$} .

BEING

The SECOND SUNDAY in LENT.

By the Right Reverend Father in God,
Dawes
WILLIAM, Lord Bishop of CHESTER.

Published by Her Majesty's Special Command.

L O N D O N :

Printed for ANNE SPEED, at the Three Crowns in
Exchange-Alley, in Cornhill. MDCCXII.

At which Place all His Lordship's Books are Sold.

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I COR. VII. 31.

And they that use this world, as not abusing it, for the fashion of this world passeth away.

BY the world here the Apostle, no doubt, meant, what we commonly call, the good things of this present life, such as Riches and Sensual pleasures, which he had been just mentioning in the two verses immediately preceeding my Text. And the use of these things he here plainly allows, but the abuse of them as plainly forbids.

I shall therefore make it my business, in my following discourse,

First, To enquire, wherein the true use, and on the contrary, the abuse of these things, doth consist.

Secondly, To offer several Arguments, earnestly to perswade Men, so to use these things, as not to abuse them: and more especially to insist upon that, here offered by the Apostle, for this purpose, viz. that the fashion of this world passeth away.

First, I am to enquire wherein the true *use*, and, on the contrary, the *abuse* of these things, doth consist. And here it may be certainly answer'd, in general, that the true *use* of these things doth consist, in using them agreeably to their own nature, and the rules and prescriptions of our Reason and Religion about them: and the *abuse* of them, in the contrary. I say, as well our Reason and Religion, as the nature of the things themselves: because, tho' this will go a great way, towards pointing out to us the general ends and uses of these things, yet it cannot of it self be sufficient to teach us the particular manners and measures, in which we must use them: but these, depending partly on the reason of things, and partly on the positive will of God, must be learnt from Reason and Revelation, in conjunction with our experience of the nature of these things themselves. And these three, thus join'd together, will give us full directions, as to this whole matter.

Come on then, and let us briefly consider, what are the several Lessons, which these, thus jointly consulted, will teach us, upon this Head. And these, if I mistake not, may be all compriz'd under the following particulars.

First, that we are not to use these things, as our supreme and ultimate good; but as goods of a much inferior nature to those of the mind, and especially those of another life.

Secondly,

Secondly, That we are to use them, as mix'd, temporary, uncertain, weak, fading and perishing goods:

Thirdly, That we are to use them, with great caution, discretion, moderation, and temperance.

Fourthly, That we are not to use them, in any such way, as will be hurtful to Society, but, on the contrary, in all such ways, as will be most beneficial to it.

Lastly, That we are to use them so, as may make most for the Honour of God,

First, That we are not to use these things, as our supreme and ultimate good, but as goods of a much inferior nature to those of the mind, and especially those of another life. For, from our constant experience of these things, from our very enjoyment of them, even in the highest perfection which they are capable of, we plainly find, that no entire satisfaction is to be had in them. But still, after all our enjoyment of them, we long and hunger after something else, we feel an emptiness and craving within our selves, a capacity for enjoying, and a desire and hope of obtaining, something much better and more satisfying.

And accordingly our Reason and Religion both assure us, that we are made for the enjoyment of much higher and nobler pleasures, than those of flesh and sense: and that we have a Spiritual and Immortal.

tal principle within us, which *disdains* to take up with these, and aspires after such as are much more refined and elevated. And, in consequence of this, they both strictly command us, not to love, not to set our affections upon, these things: that is, not to love them supremely and ultimately, not to make them the principal, much less the only, object of our desire, hope, fear, trust, affections and endeavours.

Nor is this all: but the very same Experience, Reason and Religion, which convince us, that these things are not to be aim'd at, pursu'd and acquiesc'd in, by us, as our supreme and ultimate good, do likewise farther direct and encourage us to the prosecution and attainment of such goods, as are infinitely better; of the goods of the mind, of the pleasures which spring up in that, even at present, from our conversing with spiritual and heavenly objects, from our doing good to men, from our approving the conduct of our own lives, from the peace of our Consciences, and from the joyous belief and expectation of an exceeding and eternal weight of Glory, laid up for us in another life: with which pleasures the most exquisite sensual pleasures are in no way worthy to be compared; but more especially, of the goods of another life themselves, in which alone is to be had that fullness of joy, which shall satisfy all our largest capacities and desires; and in comparison of which all the things of this world, put together, are but mere

mere loss and dung, as St. Paul elegantly expresseth it.

Then therefore, and only then, do we use the things of this world, as we ought, when we place them, in our affections, regards and prosecutions, much, at a vast distance, behind the goods of the mind and of another life; when our first and principal care and pains are for these last mention'd goods, and no more of them is bestow'd upon the other, than what can be well and most securely spar'd from these; and, to use but few words, when we never suffer our love of the world, in the least, to hinder us, from first seeking God's Kingdom and Righteousness, from making it our constant exercise, to keep a Conscience void of offence towards God and towards Man, and from having our Conversation in Heaven, and spending much of our time in contemplating upon, and preparing and fitting our selves for the enjoyment of, the incomprehensible happiness and glory of that blissfull place.

Secondly, That we are to use these things, as mix'd, temporary, uncertain, weak, fading, and perishing goods. As goods, which have a great deal of dross and alloy in them, are acquir'd with difficulty and pain, possess'd with fear and trouble, and enjoy'd with imperfection, weariness and disappointment: as goods, that, at the utmost, can last no longer than this life, and very rarely, scarce ever, last near so long: as goods, which are always fluttering and up-

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on the wing, and may, for ought we know, at any time, take their leaves of us, within a few years, or months, or weeks, or days, nay, or perhaps, this very day, or this very moment: as goods, which stand as in little stead, when we most want help, in the day of adversity, sickness, and death: as goods, many of which wither and dye in the very use and enjoyment of them, some or other of which are daily decaying, waxing old, and bidding adieu to us, and all of which, by degrees, pall upon our palates, grow more and more insipid and distasteful, and infallibly expire with us, if not before us; and consequently as goods, which are not much to be valued and treasured, much less rely'd upon, by us: as goods, which we should sit very loose and indifferent to, be always ready to part with, and able to be happy without: as goods, which we can relish the present pleasure of, without making it necessary to us, which we may contract a civil acquaintance, but, by no means, intimate friendship with.

Thirdly, That we are to use these things with great caution, discretion, moderation, and temperance. With caution, well knowing that they are apt to steal and gain too much upon our affections, and are therefore to be watch'd, and kept at a due distance, and very often deny'd admittance to our embraces, even when there would be no other harm in admitting them, than the danger of their growing too familiar, dear, and necessary to us.

With

With discretion, as finding by experience, that they may prove burisful and destructive, as well as innocent and comfortable to us; and therefore carefully consulting with our reason and religion, and by their help distinguishing and judging, in what ways, and to what degrees, we may safely and profitably indulge our selves the use of them.

With moderation: curbing and restraining our too fierce and eager appetites after these things, and keeping them within those bounds, which our well informed discretion shall chalk out for them. And

Lastly, with temperance: actually applying the directions of our discretion, and the assistances of our moderation; in the use of these things: and thereby avoiding, on the one hand, all the inconveniences and harms, and enjoying, on the other hand, all the true pleasures and advantages, that can arise from them.

Fourthly, That we be not to use these things in any such way, as will be hurtful to society, but on the contrary, in all such ways, as will be most beneficial to it. Experience teacheth us, that we may use these things so, as to make them either very detrimētall, or very beneficial, to us. Our Riches and Power may equally be made instruments of Tyranny, Oppression and all sorts of mischief, or of Relief, assistance, and all sorts of Good, to our Brethren: and we may partake of Marriage and the bed undefil'd, with profit to society, whilst effeminacy,

fornication, adultery, and such like ways of using sensual pleasures, may prove its bane. And, this being so, our reason and religion, which prefer the Interests of Society to those of single persons, and even command single persons to be careful of the things of others, as well as their own, must necessarily so far limit and restrain our enjoyment of worldly goods, as to keep it from being hurtful, may, as far as well may be, to make it profitable; to others in particular, and Society in general. And accordingly we find that Religion doth explicitly command us, to part with such portion of our Riches, as either the good of the Publick, or even Private Charity requires of us; to abridge our selves of many innocent enjoyments, for the sake of doing good, or avoiding offence and hurt, to our brethren: to partake of the pleasures of Sense in ways most convenient for Society, and to use all our Power, Authority, and Interest, for relieving the oppressed, Righting those that are wrong'd, doing justice, shewing mercy, &c.

Lastly, That we are to use these things so, as may make most for the Honour of God. For, these being all his good gifts, as both Reason and Religion assure us, nothing can be more just, than that we should use them in such a manner, as may redound most to his Glory: and besides he himself has expressly enjoin'd that, whether we eat or drink, or what-

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ever other of his good creatures we enjoy, we should do all to the praise and glory of him. Now, then we may be said to use these things most to his Glory, when we acknowledge him to be the sole Giver and Lord of them, and accordingly pray, give thanks to, and depend upon, him alone for them, and exactly follow his rules and prescriptions about them; when we use them, with humility, modesty, innocent chearfulness, and an entire resignation of them to his will; when we avoid all such excesses in our use of them, as may either dishonour our selves and the Image of God in us, or lessen and disparage these good gifts in the sight of men, and on the contrary, always use them so, as may tend to give still greater lustre and beauty to that Image of God, which he hath imprinted on us, and to make both our selves and others more and more sensible of the beneficialness of them, and more and more abundant in thanksgivings to God, for them; in one word, when we use them as Persons, that must e'er it be long, give to God himself a severe account of our use of them: when we use them as helps, but never in the least as hindrances, to the performance of our Duty, in any respect, but especially our more immediate Duty to God, our private and publick prayers, our hearing and reading his word, our receiving the Holy Sacrament, our standing up manfully in defence of his truth, &c.

These

These are the *Rules*, by which we are to Govern our selves, in the use of the things of *this world*: and, by impartially comparing our lives with which, we may certainly know, whether we do rightly use or abuse them: And, because I fear that, upon this comparison, we shall most of us be found guilty, in some degree or other, of abusing them, I shall use my best endeavours,

Secondly, to offer several *Arguments*, earnestly to perswade men, so to use these things, as not to abuse them: and more especially to insist upon that, here offer'd by the *Apostle*, for this purpose, *Viz.* that the fashion of these things passeth away. And here, not to dwell upon the Justice, Decency, Gratitude and Pubick-spiritedness of our thus doing, nor yet upon the agreeableness of it to our Characters, both as Men and Christians, to the dignity of our nature, and the tenor of our High calling, nay and our own most solemn vows and professions: I shall, for the present, confine my self to a few select Arguments, which I take to be most apt to make impression on the minds and affections of men, and they are these which follow.

First, that thus to use the things of *this world*, has been ever esteem'd most reputable and honourable amongst men.

Secondly, that it is the best way to have the true enjoyment of these things, to enjoy them, with the greatest advantage to our selves.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, that it is the *best* way to make us *easy*, under all the calamities of *this* life.

Fourthly, that it is the *only* way to *prepare* and fit us, to bear, as we ought to do, the *passing away* of *these* things.

Fifthly, that it is the *only* way to make them turn to good account to us, in another life.

And, as I go along, I shall shew under each of *these* heads, that the *abusing* of *these* things is the *direct contrary* of all this.

First, that *thus* to use the things of *this* world, has been ever esteem'd most *reputable* and *honourable* amongst men. How *great*, how *glorious*, has that man always been in the *vogue* of mankind, who has liv'd *above* this world and the things of it, has suffer'd them to *minister* to him but never to *master* him, has readily *postpon'd* and given them up to the much dearer *Interests* of *Truth*, *Justice*, *Charity*, *Religion* and the *Publick good*, and has kept them under that perfect *command* and *subjection* to him, that he could at any time *accept*, *refuse*, *enjoy*, *forbear*, *possess*, *surrender*, all or any part of them, just as his duty should require, with the utmost *indifference* and *equality* of mind? Have not these been always thought the most *shining* parts in the *illustrious* Characters, not only of the *Gentile Heroes*, but even of the *Jewish* and *Christian Worthies* themselves?

And,

And, on the contrary, how low, how mean, how very despicable, has the Character of those men always been, who have suffer'd themselves to be made slaves to this world, the Riches, Honours and Pleasures of it: who have made their Reason and Religion truckle to these, and barter'd away their Integrity for them: whose stinginess and selfishness has, as it were, cut them off, from the rest of mankind; or, which is worse, their proud and imperious tempers made them scourges, or their effeminacy and luxury, disgraces and burthens, to them: in one word, whose earthly-mindedness has, on the one hand, continually cramp'd and restrain'd them, from all truly great and generous actions, and, on the other hand, as continually prompted them to the most pityful, base and sordid ones? How inconsiderable a figure do such men generally make, how are they despis'd, or, at best, hated and fear'd, while they live, how unpity'd do they dye, how do their name and memorial, either rot and perish, or, which is worse, stink, after their death?

Secondly, That thus to use these things, is the best way to have the true enjoyment of them, to enjoy them with the greatest advantage to our selves. When we have first taken due care for those things, which are better and of much greater importance to us, we then go with a clear and easy mind to the enjoyment of the things of this world, such as they are; when

when we expect no more from *these* things, than they really have in them, they may then both not *displease* us, by *balking* and *disappointing* us, and *please* us, by *answering* our expectations; when we enjoy them, with *caution*, *discretion*, *moderation*, and *temperance*, they will both give the *best relish*, in *passing*, and leave no *sting* behind them, when *pass'd*, but *pure* and *unmix'd ease* and *cheerfulness* both of *mind* and *body* will go along with them, and no *shame*, *fear*, *satiety*, *pain*, *sickness*, or other *inconvenience* of any sort will *follow after* them: when we do good to *others*, with them, as well as to *our selves*, this will double our *joy* of them: and, when we *glorify* God, in all possible ways, by our *use* of them, this will be a *sure mean*, both, to have the *applause* of our *own minds* and the *blessing* of God added to them, and both vastly to *heighten* the *present pleasure* of them, and likewise to *secure* from God a *future increase* and *enlargement* of them.

But when we act *contrarily*, in these several respects, then *checks* and *misgivings* of Conscience: then *vexations* and *disappointments*: then *insipidness* or *distastfulness*, *forc'd* and *imperfect mirth*, *surfeiting* and *nauseousness*, *pain*, *sickness*, *shame*, and all manner of other *inconvenience*: then *refusing* to do good to *our own souls*, and *troubling* our *own flesh*: then the *reproaches* of our *own minds*, and the *curse* of God mingle with and *imbitter* all our *present worldly enjoyments*,

joyments, and cut short, if not utterly destroy, our hope of future ones.

Thirdly, That *thus* to use *these* things is the best way to make us *easy* under all the calamities of this life. The world cannot much affright or hurt that man, whose affections are very loose and indifferent to it: who sets no great value upon its favours, and knows how to shelter himself from its frowns, in the peace and joy of his own Conscience, in his trust on Divine Providence, and in his hope of that exceeding and eternal weight of glory, which he can make even the afflictions of this world, help to work out for him. Come then the very worst that can come, this man has an Anchor of his Soul sure and certain, which will keep it tolerably steady and even, among all the tumblings and tossings of the waves of this life.

But what alas! will that man do, under these circumstances, who both dotes upon the world; and knows not whither to go from it? How will he be able to bear great and frequent crosses and disappointments, from that, in which he had plac'd his chief, if not his whole hope and confidence; from which he expected his principal, if not total, comfort and satisfaction? Or to what resting place shall his troubled soul betake it self from the storms of the world, which has all along expected it's rest and protection from the world it self? Oh this it is, which makes the afflictions of this present life to strike so deep into our hearts, and to wound and vex them so sorely, that we suffer the world

to get an *entire possession* of them, and do not first take care to *invite* into them the *Holy Spirit* of God, and by his *powerful assistance*, keep the *world* out of them, *overcome* and *crucify* it to our selves, and us to it.

Fourthly, That *thus* to use *these* things is the *only* way to *prepare* and *fit* us to *bear*, as we ought, the *passing away* of them. St. Paul seems to have thought this single Argument, that the *fashion* of this world *passeth away*, sufficient to keep men from *abusing* the things of it; for, we see, he useth no other in this place. And therefore probably he meant a *great deal* by this, even *all* that can possibly be meant by it: and what that is, I shall briefly explain to you, and endeavour to represent the force of.

By the *fashion* then of this world's *passing away*, he undoubtedly meant, that the whole Scheme or State of this world, as well the *things* of this world, which make one part of this Scheme, as *our selves* who make the other part, is continually *decaying*, and shall, ere it be long, *finally perish*; that there will, come a time, when the world, all the *things* and the *wicked* men in it, shall be *burnt up together*, and that, in the mean while, both *we* *our selves* and *all* *our glory*, every thing that we *value* most in this world, shall be like a *vapour of smoak*, like the *flower of the field*, like a *garment eaten by a moth*, *uncertain* and *short-liv'd*; daily *withering*, *fading*, *consuming away*, and at length suddenly gone, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

And oh! how effectually ought *this* consideration to *with-hold* us, from *setting our hearts* upon the *things of this world*, from growing very *fond* of them, and placing much *hope and confidence* in them? *Vain* man, whosoever thou art that do'st so, how wilt thou be able to *bear the loss* of *this* or *t'other* enjoyment, of *this hopeful Child*, of *that Dear Wife* of thy *bosom*, whom thou has't lov'd as *thine own Soul*? What will become of the *Covetous* man, when his *Riches* make to themselves wings, and fly away? Where will the hope of the *sensual and voluptuous* man be, when, if nothing else, yet, at least, *sickness* or *old age*, which usually come very *fast* upon such, shall *incapacitate* him for the enjoyment of *sensual pleasures*? Or, where shall the *admirers of their own beauty* appear, when an *ill-natur'd disease*, or as *ill-natur'd time*, shall have *chang'd* it into *ugliness* and *deformity*? But, above all (oh dreadful thought!) how *miserable* will the *worldly-minded* man be, how will his *heart* quite *fail* him, when *death* shall call him away from *all his worldly enjoyments* at once: when it shall *rend* and *tear* him, in *spight* of *all his strugglings* to the contrary, from every *Dearest Object* of his *Affections*, and that too for *ever and ever*? In mere *pity* and *mercy* to *our selves* therefore, if for no other consideration, let us *enjoy* the things of *this life*, with *caution* and *moderation*; that so we may not have *continual occasions* of *fretting*, *vexing*, and *grieving* for the *loss* of them, while we *live*; and that, (which ought to be
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the great aim and endeavour of our whole lives) we may enjoy tolerable peace, contentment, and satisfaction of mind, when we come to dye.

'Tis true indeed, *this* Argument was something stronger, at the time when it was deliver'd by the Apostle, with regard to the *Corinthians*, than it is with regard to *us* at present: because they were then in danger of immediate troubles and persecutions, and so probably of having the things of the World taken from them, or themselves from the things of the world, much sooner, than is likely with us. But then it must be consider'd, that the case is much the same with those among us, who are advanced in years, that it was with the *Corinthians*: for great part of their time is already past, and it cannot be long before the State of this world shall be quite gone with them. And tho' it may possibly be otherwise with those amongst us who are young and healthy: yet, forasmuch as this is very uncertain, and what only may be may likewise not be, it would be the highest folly and madness in us, in a case of this vast importance, to risque all upon this uncertainty, and by so doing, at least to live under a constant uneasiness, from the fear of what may happen, and perhaps to foreclose our selves from being able to get the better of our love of the world hereafter, as we may at present possibly design.

Farther, I know not whether St. Paul, by this Phrase of the *fashion* (or *state*) of this world passing away, did not design to intimate to us, that there would

would be *another state* of things, immediately subsequent to *this*, which should *not pass away* like this, but be *unchangeable* and *everlasting*. I am sure, in *other places* of his Epistles, he very often couples these together, as in the 5th Chapter of 2 Corinth. For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolv'd, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens; and, in like manner, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, we have here no abiding city, but we seek one to come. And, if this was his implicit meaning, as probably it was, it will double the force of his Argument: for, as the transient and uncertain nature of the things of this world, and of our own continuance with them, is a very good reason, why we should not much settle our Affections upon them, so the consideration of an unchangeable and everlasting state of things to come, after this life, is a very good reason, why we should chiefly raise our thoughts and affections to that State, and consequently slight and neglect our present state, in comparison of that. But, whether the Apostle meant this here or no, it is so necessary an Argument, to enforce what I have been all along exhorting you to, that I cannot dispense with my self, from endeavouring to urge it home upon you, as I propose to do under my next head, which is to shew,

Lastly, That *thus* to use the things of *this* world, is the *only* way to make them turn to a good account to us, in *another* life. Another life, as I have been just hinting

hinting to you, is *that*, which we ought to have our thoughts and affections chiefly intent and fix'd upon; and all the things of this world, and the several ways of using them, are entirely to be estimated and judg'd, from their fitness or unfitness to promote our Interests, as to this life to come. And they will, as we use them well or ill, have a very great influence, towards promoting or hindering this our main end.

If we are careful to make our use of them lead us to the Blessed Author of them, and fill us with thanks, praise, love, service, and obedience to him, for them: If we make them instruments of doing much good to our Brethren: if we use them in such a manner, as will render them true comforts of our present life, and yet never let them in the least incroach upon our Duties, in order to a better life: then we shall certainly make friends of them, that so, when we fail they may receive us into everlasting habitations.

But if, on the contrary, we use them so, as to forget God who gave them: so as to do little or no good, much more so, as to do hurt by them, to our selves or others: and so, as to neglect better things, for the sake of them: then let us be assur'd, that for all these things God will bring us into Judgment.

Be not deceiv'd therefore my Brethren, God is not mock'd: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. Remember how Abraham's
right

right use of the things of *this* world, with such an entire resignation of them to the will of God, that, at his command, he was most willing to have offer'd up his own Son to him in Sacrifice, was rewarded with Paradise: and on the contrary, the Rich man's abuse of them by infidelity, uncharitableness and luxurious living, punish'd with Hell-fire.

And more especially let them remember this, whom God hath bless'd with a more than ordinary share of the good things of *this* life. Their obligations to God are much greater than those of other men, their power of doing good much larger, and their punishment, if they should abuse their worldly goods, will therefore be much sharper than that of other men too. And oh! what an intolerable change will this be in their condition, to fall from the height and very top of prosperity, into the lowest abyss of everlasting misery?

Give me leave, therefore, to charge such, in the words of Scripture, not to glorifie themselves, not to be wanton and live deliciously and luxuriously upon earth: not to be high-minded, and to trust in uncertain riches, but to trust in the living God, who giveth them all things richly to enjoy; and to do good, to be rich in good works, to be ready to distribute, and willing to communicate, treasuring up for themselves a good foundation, against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

F I N I S.